

END OF WORLD WAS POSTPONED

(On Sept. 24, 1909, the following story ran in the Boston Post. -- Ed.)

The greater body of the Triune Immersionists who awaited in vain the prophesied end of creation this morning are still maintaining their frenzied exaltation, protesting that the end is near, but that it has been postponed for only a few days.

Some of the more conservative or less impressionable of the sect have given up hope for the immediate end of the world and have dispersed to their homes, but Ashdod, where their little temple is, is still crowded with the hysterical radicals, who are expecting every moment to be their last, and seeing the preliminary signs of the break-up of creation in every incident at all out of the normal.

With the departure of the very conservative Mrs. A.J. Rawson of Lynn and Mrs. Eva Billings of Waterville, Me., the 2 women who received the message announcing the hour of the end, have also withdrawn, where no one seems to know. Their seclusion has failed to dampen the faith of others, who spend every waking hour praying and calling on God to take them into paradise.

Women Danced

All day long, even after the expected hour this morning, the fervid worked themselves into their peculiar frenzy. Women and

girls, with every symptom of hysteria or auto-hypnotism, danced about, waving their hands in the air, singing, almost convinced that they had already ceased to exist.

Through the entire day Mrs. Billings moaned for the spirit to come and take her into the clouds, and during the afternoon service she repeatedly came outside and pushed the curiosity seekers off the grounds, claiming they were too late to be saved and that the time had come.

The split in the ranks of the immersionists has been known to have existed since the extremists have been making their claims that the world would end at a certain hour in accordance with the message received from the spirit. When the more conservative ones finally decided tonight that it was not to happen at this time, some of them were pushed out of the meeting place.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Peterson, for years members of the little chapel at Ashdod, were shoved bodily out of the room, and Marshall Blakeman was also compelled by force to leave the building.

This action aroused many of the others.

Those who remained spent the night in song and prayer and in taking collections.

DUXBURY, Sept. 25 - More than 200 of the men and women who gathered at Ashdod to

prepare for the ending of the world have left for their homes convinced that the messages were wrongly interpreted. About 50 radicals still remain in frenzied exaltation, expecting at any moment to be swept away.

After a night of hysterical prayer many of the members were practically worn out.

Mrs. Eva Billings of Waterville, Me., who was credited by the other members of the society with having received the message, denied today to a Post reporter that she had ever received the message, saying that her faith was such that she believed the world was to end, but she personally had never been the recipient of such information.

Mrs. A. J. Rawson, the other woman who is said to have been visited by the angel messenger, is not at the grounds at this time.

The Immersionists held an all-night meeting and they were then led to believe that the final time was set for 3 o'clock.

Five minutes before the hour neared they dropped on their knees and remained until one minute before 3, when they arose in a body and raised their arms awaiting the coming.

They retained this attitude, all apparently ready to depart without a murmur until 1, 2, 3 minutes past the hour had ticked off and some gazed at each other with expressions of surprise that

they still remained on earth, and were unable to realize that they were again mistaken in their expectations.

Undaunted, however, by this, they immediately began further preparation, many exclaiming that God was giving them more time, as some of the band were not as yet ready to depart.

After this third disappointment, many of the conservatives left the ranks and sought sleep for the remainder of the night.

Dream in a Dream

Eva Brown, one of the members, was said to have had a vision that the end would come at 3 o'clock this morning. To a reporter who asked her how this vision appeared, she said: "It was a dream in a dream. I dreamed that a messenger from God stood before me and then I dreamed that I again dreamed another messenger from Gabriel appeared in the same, and informed me that it was my duty to tell my brethren that the Lord would come at 3 o'clock this morning.

"It was as though he took my hand and murmured things in a language that I could not understand, but which the angel in the other dream interpreted for me in a way that I could readily see that it was right.

"It was so glorious, so real, and I was so happy when I awoke."

"But," interrupted the reporter, "he didn't come; why was that?"

"It was his will; and what he does is right. What we human beings do is the wrong; he cannot be."

Meet in Chapel

The afternoon service was held in the chapel for the first time since Thursday, and it was stated that the speaker, G. A. Bates, from Hartford, Conn., wished the reporters to be present, as he wanted the world to know of some things he had to say.

During his discourse he interpreted certain sections of the

new and old testaments upon which these men and women form the basis of their belief that the world is to end.

It was not an uncommon sight today to see men and women staggering from exhaustion, brought about by their days and nights of continual prayer, some of them unable to eat and others who believe it is a sin to stop during their preparation service.

When a service adjourns a few of the members go out for edibles, while the others continue the services.

New visions are being seen by many of those who have lost so much sleep during the excitement, and it is nothing unusual to hear them come out shouting, "God will be here in an hour;" "He will take us then;" "It is too late for you men and women of that bad world," etc.

For over an hour today one of the young girls, who is not yet out of her teens, sang her prayers as though practising the scales, going as high as her vocal chords would permit and then as low. She finally fell in a faint.

The faith of the people is so strong that they are unable to believe that any harm can come to those who drop in the prayers, and although many of them are in need of medical attendance, they refuse any aid of this sort.

As the services grow longer and the nerves of the believers are keyed to a higher tension the shouting and wailing grows more hysterical, until now when they are at services indoors the cries and moans of the women and men can easily be heard all around the premises.

Relatives Worry

Many persons are here against the express wishes of their families, as is shown by the telegrams and telephone messages pleading for them to return home. Such messages, however,

(Continued on Page 23)

END OF

(Continued from Page 22)

make no impression on the enthusiasts, and they continue with even renewed fervor in their prayers and songs.

"Jesus Is Coming" and "God Will Take Care of You" are the hymns which are most frequently sung at the meetings. When one of the persons is moved to sing, it makes no difference that some other member is speaking or praying, he starts his hymn and many others join in.

One of the prominent members, who said he was merely one of "God's messengers," stated that they did just what the spirit moved them to do, and it made no difference to the other brethren.

Few of the men or women are inclined now to try to move those who are not members of the flock, as they claim it is too late, and the end is so close that all of the prayers they can offer now are barely enough to repay the spirit for the timely warning with which they have been favored.

ANNUAL ASHDOD CONVENTION

The 1972 Duxbury fall convention of The Free Christian Society will open today, Sept. 21, at 7:30 p.m., and will continue through Sunday, Sept. 24, at the Ashdod Convention Grounds on Keene St.

Incorporated in 1902, this is the 70th year the convention has been held. The flyer reads:

"This unusual Pentecostal Convention merits your attendance and support. Come get a Blessing and Be a Blessing in the Old Time Pentecostal Way."

We visited Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Haynes one Sunday afternoon in the main building. They had come from their home in Claremont, N.H., to get ready for

the convention. Mr. Haynes is the president. Mrs. Haynes started coming at the age of 10, was married at 26 and later brought 5 children and 26 grandchildren.

Buildings

The main building includes a spacious front room with old fashioned deacons' benches at either end. Religious posters and pictures cover the walls. This leads to a dining room with long tables to accommodate all for the meals. In the rear is the old kitchen and off to the right, a new kitchen, where Mrs. Haynes invited us to sit. During the week before the convention starts, Mrs. Haynes and her husband will lay in a supply of groceries. She does the cooking and bowls are placed on the tables for donations to pay for expenses.

Topside are dormitories for women. Marrieds are housed in one of the outbuildings and the other is for ministers and men. The grounds are well cared for, a rambling stone wall and some beach plum bushes which Mr. Haynes has propagated add to the scene.

Daily Routine

The day begins with an 8 a.m. service of worship in the Ashdod Chapel across the street behind which is the lovely little fenced in cemetery. Breakfast follows ("Simple but hearty fare," according to Mrs. Haynes) and then services are held from 11 a.m. until 4 when supper, the second meal of the day, is served. Next comes a period of sight-seeing, followed by the 7 p.m. service. The worshippers come from all the New England States as well as New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Local people and clergy are invited.

End of the World

The end of the world story elsewhere printed tells of the 1909 happenings. But, Mrs. Haynes told us, this was but one of many such prophecies. Indeed, many of the world's terrible happenings today have been

foretold at these meetings. Oscar Lawton's unpublished work, "Drama at Ashdod" describes some of these events.

A convention is also held in May of each year.

DUXBURY'S UNIQUE COLLECTION POND

One Duxbury "oldtimer," who wishes to remain unidentified, remembers turn-of-the-century prophecies in Duxbury of the "end of the world."

In 1900 or 1901, 3 Jehovah Witnesses were excused from Duxbury schools to await the world's end. At this time, as Miss Adele Burgess recalls, a resident named Stanley Evans ran a cobbler's shop in what is now Bos'n's Locker. Stan was affectionately known as "Skinny Miserly," because he was a clutchpenny. On the day the world was supposed to end, he stood outside his shop and handed out coins to kids who passed by. When the world didn't end, he demanded back his money.

There is another story about a ministerial member of a religious sect who had a small pond behind his house. He instructed his faithful followers to renounce all worldly goods by throwing their valuables, including watches, jewelry and coins, into his pond. Concealed beneath the surface, the story goes, he had a net into which the worldly possessions were collected and salvaged.

Many years ago, when the late James O'Neill was chief of police in Duxbury, he told the *Clipper* of hearing similar tales of frenzied religionists giving up their valuables, then trying to reclaim them when the world didn't end on schedule. That was in 1909.

A decade or so earlier it would have been more difficult to reclaim the worldly wealth. That is, unless the parishioners knew there was a net under the surface of that pond, which is still there.